

Dear Commissioners:

I completely oppose the upcoming June 2 vote for media concentration. I am currently a lecturer in communication at a liberal arts college and a freelance news reporter to CBS and an ABC affiliate, where I also once worked full-time. From my own experience and research, I am convinced that further concentration will result in fewer minds "deciding" what is news, what is worthy of public debate. It is entirely probable that if and when a television station is allowed to purchase a newspaper and/or radio station in the same market that the group owner will decide to consolidate newsrooms--a smart business decision that will save the company money and generate profit. However, this automatically means that fewer people (possibly ONE assignment editor for an entire metro area?) will be choosing what information I receive. I do not want FEWER people setting the public agenda. These are MY (our) air waves, NOT private corporations'. They are guests to lease them, as long as they are sued responsibly. This consolidation is a dangerous thought, and one which does not serve the public. The argument is also being made that the emergence of cable and satellite have provided the public with MORE options, not fewer. I must argue that the large corporations' ownership of entertainment properties (movie studios, publishers, etc) has DECREASED the public's receipt of news information, because their entertainment content delivers a larger audience, and therefore higher profit. So with more media outlets, we actually receive less news. (Example: CNN spending a half hour promoting the latest Harry Potter movie on its program, to the exclusion of other newsworthy events. Why? Harry Potter was produced by an AOL-Time Warner studio. This past week I watched an interview with the person on the cover of Sports Illustrated. Why? To promote that arm of AOL Time Warner, which owns Sports Illustrated.) More channels and more consolidation does not provide better quality programming, as the above examples indicate. Finally, as an educator in communication, part of my role (and other communication educators'), sadly, has become one of teaching "media literacy," so that these future decision and policy makers understand what they are consuming. 18-year-olds rarely realize that the information and entertainment they consume comes from only 3 or 4 companies. When I have them complete a "media inventory" and reveal (at the end) to whom each of their favorite media properties belong, they are amazed at the amount of centralized control and do not understand (flabbergasted, actually) how this could be legal in the United States. If 18-year-olds can see that this is wrong and jeopardizes democracy, why can't the FCC? Please vote NO to consolidation on June 2. Thank you.